

JOHN Reardon, who took over as caretaker manager of Wycombe Wanderers in March, was appointed team manager by the club this week (writes Stuart Earp).

The club's announcement following Monday's meeting has been expected for some time after Reardon's successful handling of the team during the closing stages of the season.

He took over the reins in March when Wycombe dismissed manager Ted Powell who had been appointed at the end of last season. Powell was sacked after applying for a coaching job abroad which he subsequently accepted.

At the time the Blues were in third place in the Rothmans Isthmian League but under Reardon's leadership they finished runners-up for the second successive year. Indeed, at one stage Wycombe needed only to win their last three games to clinch their fifth title in seven years.

In the end, Wanderers had to be content with second place but that in itself was a fine achievement. In Reardon's spell as caretaker manager, Wycombe recorded victories over Sutton, Ilford, Hitchin, Leytonstone, Slough, Barking, Tooting and Dulwich Hamlet while

they drew at Bishop's Stortford and lost to Croydon and Walthamstow Avenue.

But as well as the results, it was the happy atmosphere created by Reardon that played a large part in the club's success.

John admits that his job as caretaker manager had not been too difficult as he took over a relatively successful team. Next season, he feels, will be harder as he will be starting from scratch.

SUCCESSFUL

John has been with Wycombe for many years and was Brian Lee's assistant during the club's most successful period in their history. Lee and Reardon won four league championships and reached the third round of the F.A. Cup during their spell at the helm.

Many felt Reardon would get the job of manager when Brian Lee retired at the end of the 1975/76 season but instead, Ted Powell was appointed. Nevertheless, John stayed with the club as assistant to Powell.

Now he is in full charge of the team — his first manager's post since his days at Chesham United. With Chesham, John pulled off the miraculous feat of taking the Bucks club to Wembley in 1968 when they lost to Leytonstone in the final of the Amateur Cup.

Reardon, 44, was born in South Wales and is one of six footballers in the family. Wycombe followers know John's brother, Terry, very well as he spent several seasons at Loakes Park before moving to Slough this season.

At 18, John was on Arsenal's books but after National Service he decided to stay in amateur football as an inside forward with Slough, Maidenhead and Wycombe. He moved to Chesham as a player in 1961 and was player-manager of their reserves before succeeding Sid Prosser as first team boss. When Brian Lee was appointed Wycombe's manager, Reardon came over to the Wanderers as assistant.

John is now busy organising his playing staff for next season. He revealed that one player will be leaving at the end of the season — centre forward Howard Kettleborough, who joined the club early in the season from Dunstable. Howard is retiring from the game and plays his last match against Gateshead tonight (Friday).

The new manager told me this week: "I will be hoping to keep the majority of this year's squad together but I am also looking for forwards and midfield players."

With Kettleborough retiring and the possibility of leading goalscorer Ian Pearson returning to the professional game, Reardon's task of finding replacement forwards will be difficult. As for midfield, he is hoping to sign on an established player but feels it is unlikely that he will team up again with his brother Terry, who had a fine season for Slough Town.

For the moment John is busy finalising his players who will be touring with Wanderers to Italy from June 4-11.